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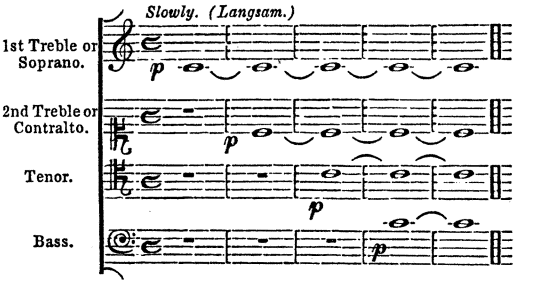
CHOIR AND CHORUS SINGING.*

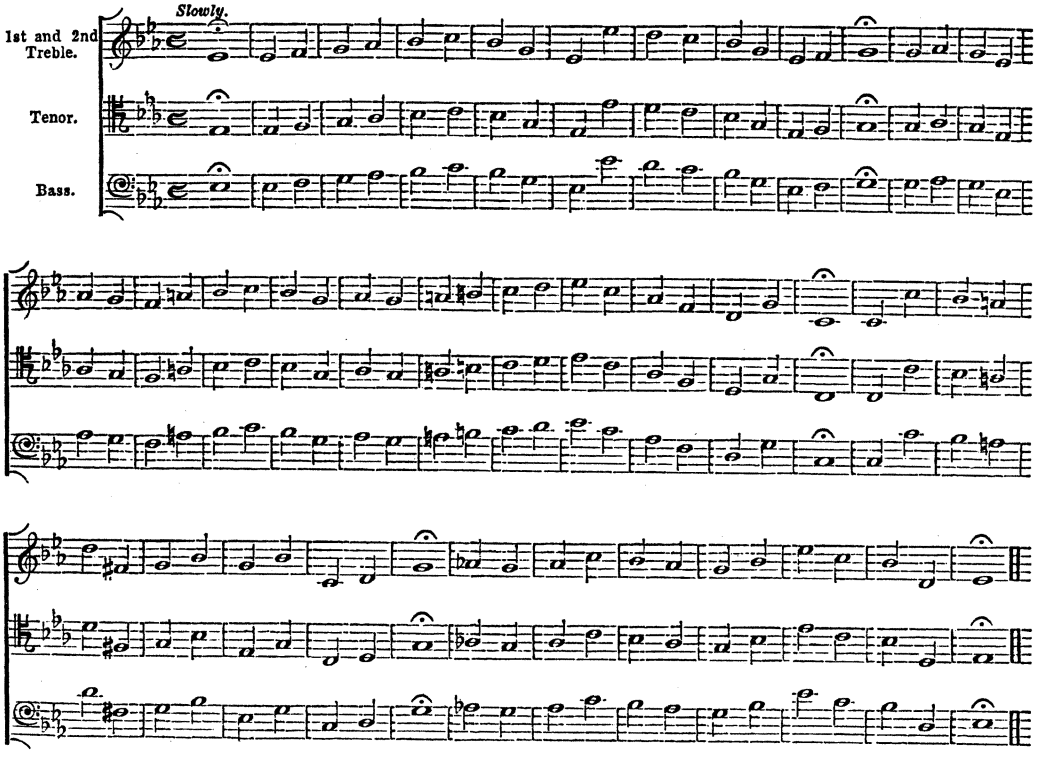
(Continued from page 402, Vol, 5.)

25. The second method consists in joining all the voices, when the partial practices have produced the desired results, in the unison of one note entoned by the Master,—in causing this note to be struck first by all the first trebles, then by all the seconds, then by the tenors, and lastly by the basses, and fixing all the beginnings at a distance of four beats in slow time:—

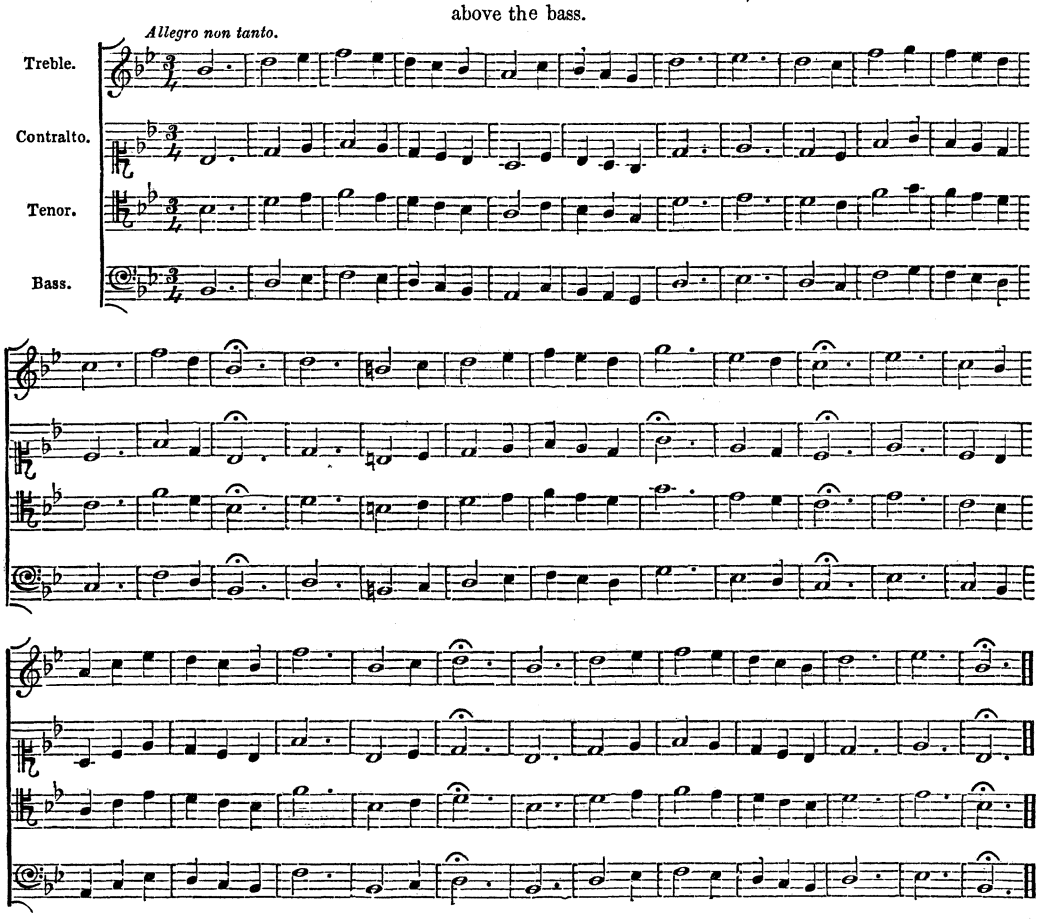


The unison of the tonic can only be taken in the scales of C and D; in all the other scales the difference of the voices obliges them to be placed in octaves. The practice of a true concord in the octave should accordingly follow that of the unison. This study should be made on some such exercises as the following:—

* *A Treatise on Choir and Chorus Singing.* Novello: London and New York. Price 4s. 6d., sewed.

Exercises in which the first and second trebles are in unison, and at a distance of an octave from the tenor and bass.

26. This exercise, and others similar to it, should be practised at first slowly and *(mezza voce)* with the middle strength of the voice; for one of the greatest difficulties in Choir and Chorus singing, is to sing correctly in the *piano*. Observe, that in such an exercise all the sounds should be of equal strength, and that all shading, or gradations of sound, should be banished from it. When the greatest possible precision has been attained, they should be sung loudly and quickly. Observe also, that to assist the singers, and to render the breathing easy, the best plan is to name the notes in singing.

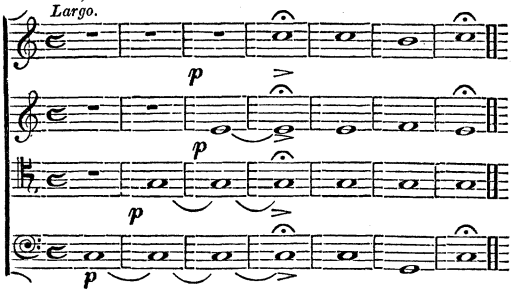
27. The exercises in octaves, where the tenor is an octave above the bass, and the trebles an octave above the tenor, present more obstacles to a correct performance, since the unity of effect is weakened by the extent of the intervals. Examples of this arrangement are sometimes to be found in the scales of A, B, and C. It is well to accustom a Choir or Chorus to this kind of difficulty by examples such as the following:—

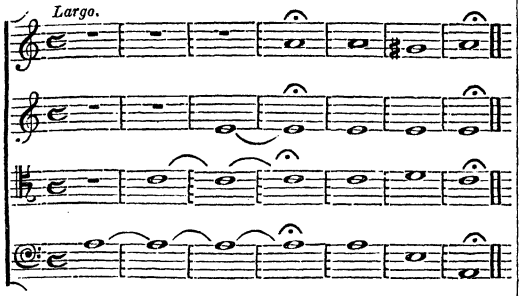
Exercise in which the first treble is an octave above the contralto and tenor, and these are an octave above the bass.

28. This exercise on singing in octaves, and mezza-voce, is one of the most necessary and the most difficult. It requires, on the part of the Director of a Choir or Chorus, a very delicate ear, add much strictness with regard to the exactness of the pitch; I mean by this, an absolute correctness, by which an identity of note is established among all the voices — that identity which should be the object of the practice.

Whatever be the degree of perfection to which the Choir or Chorus may at last arrive, it will be necessary for the Master to have some exercises sung in octaves at every practice, in order to cherish and develop the perception of an absolute correctness of pitch, to which no one can arrive who only uses execises in harmony. In harmony there is a certain attraction which immediately establishes an approximate correctness; but it is more difficult to appreciate absolute correctness of pitch there, than in the simple exercise of the octaves.

CHAPTER IV.

Concord and exercise of the voices in Harmony.

29. When the preparatory exercises of the singers by groups have been completed, so as to allow of all the Choir or Chorus being united,—and after the exercises on the octave have insured the correctness of the intonation,—it will be time to proceed to harmonic concord. There is a formula which experience has led to be considered the best to give the feeling of the tone and mode of the exercise or piece about to be sung; it is composed of three chords only, of which the first is made upon the tonic—the second upon the dominant—and the third upon the tonic. It is a good plan for the basses to sound the first note, which is the tonic; for the tenor to follow on the fifth, for instance; then the contralto on the third (*i. e.* tenth); and finally, the treble on the octave (*i. e.* fifteenth):—

30. The arrangement of the parts is not always the same, in order to place the voices in the middle of

their compass. For instance, in A major and minor the tonic in the bass octave would be too low for the basses and tenors; it is therefore placed in the upper octave, an arrangement which obliges some change in the upper parts:—

The Director of the Choir or Chorus should have these exercises on intonation made in every key. He need not have them written; for it will be enough, after giving the note to the basses, to tell the tenors, contraltos, and trebles, that they should take the third, fifth, and octave above the note given; familiarity with this exercise will soon be attained by the Chorus. Every piece of music should be preceded, in school practice, by the harmonic intonation of the mode in which it is written.

(To be continued.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

This Journal will be published fortnightly until August next, on the 1st and 15th of the month.

The late hour at which Advertisements reach us interferes much with their proper classification.

Colored Envelopes *are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.*

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

J. T., Swansea, *will find what he requires in Novello's Catalogue, No.* 1.

J. S., Clayton, *is thanked for his obliging communication relative to Sir John Stevenson's Anthem, of which we shall be glad to see a copy.*

Encores.—*We have always disputed that encores (so diligently recorded by our correspondents) are to be taken as a criterion of merit in the performance. They may much oftener be traced to want of judgment on the part of the audience.*

R. S., Edensor.—*We are always obliged by suggestions of pieces for insertion in the* Musical Times, *from practical instructors.*

Brief Chronicle of the last Fortnight.

Portsea Island Ecclesiastical Music Society, established last year, gave its second performance this season, which included "Teach me, O Lord," Rogers; "Rejoice in the Lord," Nares; "In Thee, O Lord," Weldon; "Blessing and Glory," and "Blessed is he," Dr. Boyce; with other anthems and services of sterling merit.

Liverpool Choral Union.—A society under this name has been formed for the study and practice of sacred and secular music, under the auspices and with the approbation of the Rev. J. S. Howson, M.A., Principal of the Collegiate Institution.

Lincoln.—A highly successful concert by the Amateur Philharmonic Society took place on the 28th March. We are informed that £50 has been handed to the Penitent Females' Home, as the result of this performance.

The Coventry Choral Union had a crowded meeting at St. Mary's Hall, on the 30th March; Mr. William Chater, conductor.

Mr. Case's Monster Concert at Exeter Hall took place on the 28th March.

Philharmonic Rooms.—A new suite of rooms for concerts, &c. will be opened, under this name, at 14, Newman-street, by Mr. Charles Cotton.

The Totnes Choral Society performed Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, and a selection from Haydn's *Seasons*, on the 21st March. Mendelssohn's great work gave so much satisfaction that it is to be repeated early next month.

Stockport.—The second glee concert took place on the 3rd April, and was even more fully attended than the one recorded, ante, p. 404, Vol. V.

Cecilian Society.—Mendelssohn's oratorio, *St. Paul*, was performed on the 6th April by this old established society.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—The Sacred Harmonic and Choral Society, under the direction of Dr. Ions, gave Handel's *Samson* on the 28th March, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* on the 30th. The vocalists were Mrs. Endersohn, Miss Collins, Miss Duke, Mr. Lockey, and Mr. Lawler. The latter oratorio was performed on the intermediate evening, by the same society, at Sunderland.

Rawtenstall.—A new organ, by Kirkland and Jardine, of Manchester, is to be opened by Mr. Hopkins, of the Temple, on the 14th April, when Haydn's *Creation* will be performed.

Orchestral Union.—This excellent orchestra gave its first performance on the 8th April. The society offers to concert-givers the great advantage of an organized orchestra which may be engaged for one sum; this facility, we trust, will promote the use of orchestral instead of pianoforte accompaniment at public concerts.

Christ Church Harmonic Society, of Albany-street, Regent's-park, gave a public performance on 4th April, at Store-street, when Mozart's 12th Mass, and Spohr's Sacred Cantata, *God, Thou art great*, were produced.

The Macclesfield Sacred Harmonic Society gave Handel's *Judas Maccabæus*. The society is a new one. It was assisted by its neighbours from Stockport, and by the universal northern favorite, Mrs. Sunderland.

Mr. Charles Salaman gave his third and last pianoforte soirée on the 28th March.

Mrs. Thompson (late Miss Kate Loder).—This talented young lady has determined, we understand, to play no more in public. Her performance at the Philharmonic Concert, last week, was stated to be her last. On that occasion she played Mendelssohn's Concerto, No. 2, and the musical writers of the *Times*, *Athenæum*, and others speak highly of her performance, and express regret at her retirement. The *Times* says:—"Though short, the career of Mrs. Thompson has been one of the most brilliant. Few English pianists have attained so distinguished a position or deserved it so thoroughly. Her retirement from our public concerts will be generally regretted, since we shall have to count one good artist the less, and we shall not have too many to boast of."—*Bath Journal.*